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***A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM AND TWO PLAYS***

**by**

**Helen M. Sianos**

**A Creative Writing Thesis  
Submitted to the College of Graduate Studies & Research  
through the Department of English and Creative Writing  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Arts at the  
University of Windsor**

**Windsor, Ontario, Canada**

**1998**

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## **DEDICATION**

**I dedicate my three plays to my father's spirit which inspired their birth.**

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

**I would like to thank Dr. Ditsky, who asked all the right questions and taught me how to evaluate, reconsider and defend my writing and its worth. Not enough kind words, terms of endearment or gratitude can be expressed to Dr. Alistair MacLeod for all his attention, guidance and support, while he was my instructor at the University of Windsor. And to my mother who nourished me emotionally during the writing of my plays and believed in me when even I doubted myself.**



## ***A Midsummer Night's Dream***

**by Helen M. Sianos**

### **Characters**

Steve	President of the Hellenic-Canadian Federation--The Toronto Chapter In his early forties
Lyta	Steve's wife In her late thirties
Aggie	Father to Mia In his early sixties
Mia	Aggie's daughter In her late twenties
Luke	In love with Mia In his early thirties
Demetre	An Entrepreneur In his early thirties
Helen	In bnlove with Demetre In her late twenties
Peter Quincopoulos	An Electrician In his late fifties
Nick	Owns a dry cleaning business In his late forties
Ron	Vice-President of the Hellenic-Canadian Federation In his late forties
Tania	Ron's wife and owner of a movie theatre In her late thirties
Gus/Kosta Goodakis	The errand boy for the Federation In his twenties

Scene: Toronto, on a street in Greektown.

Act I, scene 1

*The board room of the Hellenic Canadian Federation--the Toronto Chapter.*

*Enter Steve and Lyta.*

Steve: Let's see how much money the treasury collected over the year?

Lyta: What took the Federation a year to collect we'll have in our pockets by tonight.

Steve: We'll leave for Athens and these stupid masturbators--these *malakes*--won't know what hit them.

Lyta: We're going to get what we deserve.

Steve: We've attended and presided over all the boring meetings, dinners, church socials, greek school celebrations and parades without anything to show for our efforts. Now it's time to collect.

Lyta: By the time they discover the missing money, Steve, we'll...

Steve: Shut up Lyta--*skase*--and listen, don't interrupt me while I'm thinking. I'll get Gus to call the idiots for the meeting.

*Lyta exits. Steve yells to the door.*

EEHHH!!--Gus, you *malaka*, tell the voicing members to stop playing with their worry beads and to get in here!

*Enter Aggie and his daughter Mia, and Luke and Demetre.*

Steve: *Koumbare!* Aggie, how the hell are you?

Aggie:       *(Frantically, in a heavy greek accent.)* I so mad I spit. *(He spits.)* Two weeks ago Demetre's family, remember *koumbare*, you there, came over and our families celebrate because made promise to exchange the word-- the *logos*--between their child and my daughter to get married.

Steve:       Yeah, so what's the problem?

Aggie:       Mia says she wants to break *logos* because she loves Luke. Stupid *mungycake* she wants!!

Steve:       What!! Now that your mother, God rest her soul, *(does the sign of the cross three times and looks up)* isn't with us anymore, you should worship, listen and fear your father like you would God.

Aggie:       I ask her what wrong with Demetre--he good child to his father, has five restaurants in Greektown, houses and two cars. What the hell??!! She want to marry Luke, stupid WASP, has PhD in ancient greek. How the hell he going to support Mia and children? Thanks to the God you here, her godfather, and tell her something because she not give a *sheet* about her father.

Steve:       Forget Luke and marry Demetre. How are the two of you going to feed yourselves, by eating Luke's PhD, or using it as a plate to gather the few crumbs you can to eat?

Mia:         I'd rather eat his degree than eat what Demetre cooks.

Steve: Mia! His father's restaurants serve the best souvlaki and mousaka in Greektown. You'll eat well, trust me.

Mia: During this little get-together I was never consulted. I wasn't even there!

Steve: That's a technicality and you found out anyway.

Mia: But Demetre cannot satisfy me the same way Luke does.

Steve: Where did you learn to speak like that?!? Just because you went to the university doesn't mean you can speak like a man. Marry Demetre so your father can see some grandchildren and girls before he dies.

Mia: *(Exasperated.)* Why is it always the boys are called the children in the family? What am I, just a piece of reproductive shit.

Steve: Be a good girl and listen to your father.

Mia: So what are my options if I decide to marry the *mungycake* instead of the stupid greek boy?

Steve: You'll be ostracized from your family and this federation.

Mia: That's your blessing?!?

Steve: Your father would've helped you raise your children while you helped Demetre in the restaurant. If you pick Luke, you get nothing. And what kind of greek orthodox children will you raise?!? Are they going to eat cake that the mungy brings home?

Mia: The mungycake has a name and who says I even want kids for Christ's sake!

Steve: Hey, isn't your wife only half greek?

Steve: Doesn't matter, because I'm all greek.

Demetre: Come on Mia...

Luke: Listen De, since you and her father get along so well why don't the two of you get married?

Aggie: You stupid *mungycake*, get the hell out...she my daughter so you go fuck! She marry Demetre!

Luke: Listen Aggie, Mia and I love each other, and although I don't own half of Greektown, I can offer her a life and family De cannot.

Steve: Don't take this personally. It has nothing to do with you and everything to do with Mia's choice.

Luke: I know more about being greek than you'll ever know.

Steve: Reading Aeschylus doesn't initiate you. You're on the outside looking in.

Luke: Then why can't you see the obvious?

Steve: What are you talking about? I don't have to see it, I live it.

Luke: Helen has the hots for De, so why not bring the two of them together?

Steve: She, my philhellenic, is not good enough. So, what I say still stands! Take it or leave it!

Mia: What he means Luke is that she doesn't have much of a dowry.

Luke: What?

Mia: Her parents were bankers and the only thing they own are the pensions they worked their whole lives to get.

Luke: So, what's wrong with that?

Mia: It means that Helen's trying to snag a greek man who will make the myth her parents and this community have been telling her since the day she was born a reality.

Luke: I still don't get it.

Mia: Although her parents didn't become stereotypical greek-restaurant-owners, at least Helen should marry a greek man who fits the myth.

Steve: Hey!

Aggie: Enough!

Luke: I just don't get it.

Steve: As hard as her parents try, they'll never fit in.

Luke: But they're greek.

Steve: Mia, enough!!! (*Motions to Demetre and Aggie.*) You two are executive members of the federation so you have to attend the meeting. Where the hell is Ron? He's missed a couple of meetings?

Aggie: Mia, tonight you must pick! Me or *mungy*. (*Speaks to others*) I come, but this time let Demetre make greek coffee because you make it like *sheet*.

*Exit all except Luke and Mia.*

Luke: Are you okay, Mia? You look pale.

Mia: (*Quietly.*) I'm so mad I could, I could...

Luke: I guess it's true when they say that the course of true love never runs smoothly.

Mia: *(Ignores Luke and continues)* I can't believe that they dismissed us like that...they even threw the orthodox faith in my face as a reason not to marry you, God!

Luke: Forget what they said. They're the first generation who came in the 50's and 60's and...

Mia: ...they're still there. Yet the greeks in greece...

Luke: I know, I know, they've progressed while...

Mia: They've regressed all the way back to the cave.

Luke: I don't know what to tell you...Why do they have such xenophobia? Why didn't they stay in Greece?

Mia: You know how it is...they all thought they'd come and make their millions and take it back with them...

Luke: Yeah, I remember reading an entire article about that phenomenon.

Mia: It's one thing to read about it and it's another to live through it.

Luke: Remember my aunt Susan? You met her last Christmas. She's the rich widow whose husband was one of the those New England lawyers who came from old money.

Mia: Yes, I remember.

Luke: Well, she owns a place in Muskoka.

Mia: She's the one who only lets you visit her.

Luke: We can stay with her for a while after we elope.

Mia: Elope?

Luke: I know it's not the most romantic idea but...

Mia: It's the most practical. I hope this works?

Luke: Tonight meet me outside that restaurant on Greektown where I met you  
with Helen for lunch on the first of the May-day celebrations.

Mia: All right Luke, I'll meet you in Aphrodite for a drink.

*Exit Luke. Enter Helen.*

Mia: Hey Hel, how are you?

*They both come face to face and exchange kisses on both cheeks.*

Helen: Why bother asking? You should know.

Mia: Not again!

Helen: Each time I'm interested in a man and he finds out we're friends he  
pursues you! My God, Mia, I think you've given me the evil eye. Mia:  
Ancient superstitions aren't your answer.

Helen: The church believes in the evil eye.

Mia: So then why don't you throw me a dirty look so De will leave me alone.

Helen: Don't mock me. I'm not stupid you know! You have Luke, why can't  
you let me have Demetre?

Mia: I don't own him! You're lucky we've been friends for so many years or  
else I'd tell you a true thing or two about De.

Helen: Just because his father was one of those who came Fresh Off the Boat  
years ago...



Mia: Our own parents are FOBs too, so I'm not ridiculing anybody. Hel, really, I tried to get rid of him. I even cursed him--I told him a katara. I hoped he would die choking on his own vomit from ouzo poisoning as he sat in one of his feta-cheesy restaurants. And in the end do you know what he said?

Helen: How could I, I wasn't there.

Mia: He said we should get married because it's the right thing to do.

Helen: God! This isn't love, or lust; it's a business transaction! De owns half the restaurants in Greektown and your father owns the men's coffee houses and they think they can come together and own the whole town. Does your father think he's Philip-of-fucking Macedon and De's Alexander the Great horse fucker!

Mia: Shut your grimy mouth and listen to me...

Helen: What? You know it's the truth.

Mia: Just shut up and listen. Luke and I are going to elope.

Helen: What?

Mia: We're meeting tonight in Aphrodite's and then we're leaving for Muskoka!

Helen: What about the plans you made, the plans we made as kids?

Mia: Helen, we've been friends for so many years and you were the first one I introduced Luke to even before my mother met him. You must understand? Once Luke and I are married, you can pursue De until you turn blue in the face, but I think he's the wrong man for you--I don't think he's right for any woman.

Helen: *(In shock.)* So that's your plan!

Mia: Take care of yourself by not pursuing De.

*Mia exits.*

Helen: I've got to make De see for himself that he cannot have her. I'll take him to Aphrodite's. His greek machismo will choke his ego when he sees I'm right, and it will bring this escapade to an end. I remember the first time I saw Demetre. He stood in the pews during Sunday service. A tall teenager with dark hair whose face lit the room like the candles framing the icons. Every Sunday I would catch him staring at me with my brothers by my side and he would come to talk to them after the service.

*Stage goes black.*

Scene 2

*In the basement of Peter Quincopoulos's house. Peter and Nick are hunched over a table under a hovering cloud of cigarette smoke.*

Peter:           *(Speaks with a heavy greek accent and heavy on the h.)* Another night of backgammon--hey Nick bring the *tavli* board over so we can start playing.

Nick:           *(The h pronounced heavily.)* O-h! Okay, it's here! So let's play.

*The backgammon board hits the table followed by the sound of rolling dice.*

Peter:           *(Speaks as he rolls the dice on the board and smoke shoots out of his nostrils.)* You see the ads in the Hellenic-Toronto newspaper? How they look? Like *sheet*?

Nick:           Mmmm. Is okay.

Peter:           What do you mean okay, just okay--do he spell our names good--answer!  
*(He sees Nick make a strategic move with the roll of the die.)* FTOU!  
*(Pseudo spit to signify anger/disapproval.)*

Nick:           A-HA! A-HA! A-HA!

Peter:           *(Stops playing and announces grandly by cutting through the smoke with his hands.)* Does paper show my name? Show my name, Peter Quincopoulos, Electrician with twenty-five year experience, and your name, you stupid *sheet*, your name Nick the Dry Cleaner. You read english and greek, so how looks in paper?

Nick:           It's good. Shut up and play.

Peter:           *(Realizing that he's losing the game...)* No like, no like this game. O-kay!  
I want eat and drink so I play better. Let's go to Aprhodite's.

Nick:           Now?

Peter:           Yeah! We play again later!

Nick:           You think everybody from Federation there?

Peter:           No, still too early. But Tania, you know, Ron's wife, she be there. She  
married to the bottle and bar.

Nick:           I hear that she like to fuck with...

Peter:           Don't be a village gossip--*koutsombola*--or else people will gossip about  
you.

*The men stand and their chairs noisily scrape against the floor and their heads rise out of  
the cloud of smoke like mountain peaks in mist.*

*Stage goes black.*

Act 2, scene 1

*On the main street that cuts through Greektown.*

*Enter Gus Goodakis [Kosta] walking to the middle of the stage. He holds a cigarette in one hand and smokes furiously, inhaling through his mouth and exhaling through his nose.*

Gus: Gus, what did you get yourself into this time? Christ I'm always at the wrong place at the wrong time. Why can't I keep my mouth, eyes and ears shut? Why can't I get a real job instead of being their little slave--*(he speaks with a heavy greek accent to imitate his superiors in the Federation)*--'Kosta! Bring the kafe, open the door, close the door, pick up my wife, pick my nose, wipe my ass'--*(returns to a regular accent)* fuck! I got to get out of there--they're all fucking each other and they're fucking with my mind.

*Gus drops his head and cigarette at the same time and steps on the remains. Slowly lifts his head and speaks as the last puff floats out of his mouth.*

If just once in my life I said to Ron, 'Fuck you man, you go pick up your wife for her doctor's appointment, you guys don't pay me enough,' I wouldn't be up shit creek without a paddle. Christ, can't Ron satisfy her anymore. She's fucking some twenty-something young punk whose not even greek. I was just doing my job.

*Nervously, pulls out a pack of cigarettes from the back pocket of his pant, lights a cigarette and begins to smoke.*

*From the two opposite ends of the stage enter Ron and Tania. They face each other and the yelling match begins.*

Ron:           *(With flaying arms and hand gestures.)* You slut--you *poutana*!

Tania:       Go to hell!

Ron:       I'm still your husband!

Tania:       Only in title and not in deeds.

Ron:       What are you doing out on the streets so early in the afternoon?

Tania:       How dare you even suggest that I'm a...

Ron:       Too afraid to hear the truth?

Tania:       Truth...the truth is that you try to cheat on me, but can't do it.

Ron:       You filthy, lying...

Tania:       Don't pretend you're the dutiful, greek husband. I don't know where you find the time since your two homes are the Federation offices and the men's coffee houses.

Ron:       It's in those coffee house--*ta kafenia*--that I found out about your boy-toy. You're the talk on the street and I want it to stop.

Tania:       You're just jealous because...

Ron:       All of this can come to an end, on one condition.

Tania:       What condition when I'm not even...

Ron:       You share.

Tania:       You dirty son of a FOB, you're a pathetic peeping tom. I won't give you the satisfaction.

*Tania exits the stage.*

Ron: Gus, I'm glad you're here. Christ! Did you see the mess and embarrassment she puts me through. Come by the house and pick up a gift I have for Tania.

Gus: Not again! Ron...

Ron: Do you want the job or not? So, come by the house and pick up the bottle of *tsipouro*!

Gus: Are you nuts!?! That stuff is 100 proof! Are you trying to kill her?!?

Ron: No, but get her drunk enough that she won't know whether she's fucking that boy-toy or her toy poodle. *(Ron and Gus begin to exit.)* After we fight she goes to Aphrodite's and has a couple of drinks and tries to pick up men. The owner is a poker buddy of mine and told me so. Come on.

*Ron and Gus exit.*

*Demetre enters followed by Helen.*

Demetre: Helen, stop following me like my pet dog.

Helen: I just want to make sure that you understand what's going on.

Demetre: Listen, I got to see it to believe it. You've always been jealous of Mia, since you were teenagers, so how can I possibly trust what you say.

Helen: Well, then go see and hear for yourself at Aphrodite's what I've been telling you all along. And if I'm right, then what will you do?

Demetre: If you're right, then I'll do something everybody will regret.

Helen: Can we regret together?

Demetre: I don't want to share my misery.

Helen: But it loves company.

Demetre: Then what a lovely pair we'll make, indeed. Until then, I have to see and hear it for myself.

*Demetre leaves the stage.*

Helen: A miserable pair is better than no affair at all.

*Helen exits following Demetre.*

*Enter Ron followed by Gus holding several bottles.*

Ron: Gus, can you carry the alcohol without a problem?

Gus: Yeah, so now what?

Ron: Go to Aphrodite's and speak to the owner. Tell him you're my friend. Tell him to give Tania a couple of shots compliments of the house.

Gus: Is that all?

Ron: No, make sure that everybody gets a couple of shots each so it does not look too suspicious. That's it.

Gus: Fine. I'm outta here.

*Both men exit the stage in opposite directions.*



## Scene 2

*Another part of Greektown. The front face of Aphrodite's with an arched entrance way leading to the interior of the restaurant. Enter Tania who stands at the entrance.*

Tania:           *(Speaks to herself.)* I might as well pay the owner rent because I come here so often.

*Tania walks through the doorway and sits herself at one of the empty tables.*

*Mia and Luke appear on opposite ends of the stage, walk towards each other, and stand in front of the doorway.*

Luke:           Hi! *(He gestures to kiss her but she pulls away abruptly.)*

Mia:           You know how I feel about it here.

Luke:           All right, let's go in and figure out the rest of our lives--*(ironically)* no big deal!

Mia:           Remember, keep your hands to yourself because my father knows the owner.

Luke:           *(Sarcastically)* I'm sure by now they've heard about us all the way back to Athens. Well, if I've put up with it for this long, what's another couple of hours.

*Luke and Mia enter the restaurant and sit at a table.*

*Enter Demetre followed by Helen.*

Demetre:       Woman, stop following me and get a life of your own. I know how to get to the restaurant, I'm not a child.

Helen: I'm just coming along to prove to you that I am right (*speaks under her breath to herself*) and hopefully right for you.

*They both enter the restaurant and sit at a distant table away from the other two tables.*

*Three waiters bring them the complimentary shots of the tsipouro and they all take several shots each except Mia and Helen.*

Luke: Hey, bring me another, this shit's great!

Mia: Relax, that stuff smells pretty strong and we have a lot of planning to do.

Luke: Well, if you're not going to drink it let me have yours. (*Drinks the remaining shots on the table.*) What is this stuff called?

Mia: (*Turns around and notices Demetre and Helen. Helen is busy with Demetre trying to pry the third shot away from his hand.*) Great! Luke, don't look, but De and Helen are here. What is wrong with that woman? After so many years of friendship and I still can't figure her out. Luke, relax with the shots.

Luke: You relax, I've been putting up with all your greek this and greek that shit! I've been called *mungycake* I don't even know how many times, so why don't you give me a break.

Mia: I'm just saying...

Luke: We've got to stop saying and start doing. (*Drinks another shot.*) Does your father think that by you marrying De and multiplying the greek race that the golden age will return? Does he think he's on some Odyssean journey whose goal is to create a Canadian Ithaca?

*(Tania continues to call to the waiter who keeps bringing her shots to drink.)*

Mia: Now you're just being dramatic. Sit down, you're getting drunk.

Luke: *(Takes another shot.)* Dramatic! I am not Sophocles and you are not Antigone. So stop trying to be a martyr. Look, there's Helen with that asshole De. *(He stands up and begins to yell.)* Eh! Helen, Helen of Troy, Helen of Sparta, Helen of my dreams, especially the wet ones, come over here. Now there's a woman who follows a man till death do them part. You, Mia, should take some lessons, and you know what else, she isn't all that bad looking. You know what they say, I think I'm translating it from the greek--ugly in the face but beautiful between the sheets--that's what I want. I bet you she doesn't care what anybody thinks if the man she loves publicly touches her. *(Attempts to fondle Mia's breast publicly and she slaps his hand away from her chest.)*

Mia: *(Pulls away from him and stands up.)* I may not be a classical greek scholar, but I'm going to pull an Antigone on you if you don't pull yourself together.

Luke: Well it's about time you showed some emotion toward me publicly.

Mia: I've got to leave.

*Mia exits leaving everyone else in the restaurant.*

Act 3, scene 1

*The restaurant, Aphrodite. Tania slumped over the table and her arms hanging off the side of the table, like a limp puppet.*

*Enter Peter and Nick who sit at a table near Tania.*

Nick: Since your idea to come, you pay for food and ouzo.

Peter: If it wasn't for me you never leave basement.

Nick: Peter?

Peter: Yeah?

Nick: Look who next to us.

Peter: *(Turns his head and glares at Tania with a smirk of ridicule and contempt drawn across his face.)* Look at her...that's what happen when you get screwed into Federation.

Nick: Like animals all they do is fuck in Federation!

Peter: They going to kill each other in the end.

Nick: I hear that Aggie's daughter going to marry Demetre and then she change her mind and marry *mungy*.

Peter: I never let my daughter do that to me.

Nick: See, if you get involved in Federation then your business become talk over ouzo.

Peter: Ah! Be quiet, because even walls have ears and eyes.

Nick: Yeah, we not village women who sit around and talk all day, so shut up!

All right, where's the ouzo?

*Enter Gus.*

Gus: Great, perfect! I got the gossiping village idiots sitting right beside Tania.  
Great! I might as well sit and watch the show.

*A waiter brings the ouzo to the table and Tania slowly begins to move while the men continue to drink and fight over the appetizers.*

Nick: Ohh! Every time, every time...

Peter: Ohh, you got to piss again! Every time you drink little ouzo you piss...you worse than a woman...can't drink a shot!

Nick: Move, I got to pee.

Peter: You worse than my wife.

*Nick gets up from his chair and moves off the stage. Peter continues to drink. Tania slowly sits up and Nick reappears, walks across the stage and settles into his seat.*

Peter: Oh *sheet*! I got to go now too!! I'm not feeling too good. Something wrong with ouzo, I'm leaving.

Nick: Ehh! Nothing wrong with the ouzo, now who like a woman and can't drink, eh?!? You just need to eat something more.

Peter: Forget it! I'm not paying because you going to eat it all! I'm leaving.

*Peter leaves the restaurant except for Nick who continues to eat and drink.*

Nick: Sheet! Now I have to pay bill and tip.

*Tania slowly lifts her head and stares directly at Nick. Nick raises his glass, as he comes face to face with her, and gives her a toast.*

Tania:           *(Mumbles to herself.)* Great! He's nice and close, so let's check out the merchandise. *(She brushes the lighter off her table under Nick's table and when she bends to pick it up she takes a long look directly at his pelvis.)* Oh my! *(Lifts her head up and bangs it against the table.)* Ohhh!

Nick:           Opa! Watch you don't crack your head...just rub it hard and it will feel better.

Tania:           Would you mind getting my lighter from under your table, I can't reach.

*Nick reaches for the lighter and gives it to her. They come face to face.*

Nick:           Here!

Tania:           Thank you, handsome.

Nick:           You still must be drunk and can't see me.

Tania:           No, no, you're better looking than my husband.

Nick:           Oh! You like really hairy greek men.

Tania:           Yeah, it gives me something to hold on to...

Nick:           Too drunk and married! Eh! Garcon, bring me the bill.

Tania:           No, no don't leave.

Nick:           No more food.

Tania:           Come to my place and I'll show you a feast.

Nick:           And then have greek mafia beat me up, no way.

Tania:           Don't worry.

Nick:           You married to mafia.

Tania:           See the two men by the door?

*(She points to Gus who pretends to look away.)*

Nick: I see only one, so you still drunk.

Tania: They'll protect us.

Nick: That's the punk Kosta, he only tell on me and not protect you.

Tania: No, no. Look.

*Tall, stocky man in dark shades wearing an open shirt stands between the two tables near Gus who notices the action and shakes his head.*

Gus: Wrong place, wrong time.

*Stage goes black.*

Scene 2

*On a street corner in Greektown.*

*Enter Ron and Gus.*

Ron: Did you get her drunk?

Gus: Yeah, I did it and she's so drunk that she made a pass at some stupid FOB.

Ron: Anyone I know.

Gus: Yeah, I think he's the owner of that dry cleaner I take your suits to every other week.

Ron: Jesus Christ!

Gus: What?

Ron: She'll be the talk of Greektown-gossip-groups. Did you get the other ones drunk too?

Gus: Well, actually, only a *cake* got drunk and was screaming for the other greek chick.

*Enter Mia followed by Demetre. They stand on the other side of the stage opposite to Ron and Gus who face each other and listen to the two speak.*

Demetre: Mia, his behaviour was disgraceful.

Mia: Listen, I know that it's the alcohol and not him, so just stop following me around like some lost animal looking for a home. Don't you get it, I don't care about your money, and the number of cars, homes or shishkebobs you have to your name, I don't want anything to do with you.



Demetre:        So, the son of a FOB isn't good enough for you but you're willing to take  
                      a man who says he wants to fuck another woman?

Mia:             It's the alcohol talking not him.

Demetre:        Alcohol releases the truth.

Mia:             Maybe you should've gotten drunk too?

Demetre:        What you see is what you get.

Mia:             Who are you?

Demetre:        Reconsider your decision and options.

Mia:             What options? Marry you?

*Mia exits followed by Demetre.*

*Ron and Gus turn and face the audience.*

Kosta:           I really did a fuck-up of a job this time.

Ron:            Good.

Gus:            You want to make your wife miserable and take everyone along for the  
                      ride? Christ, here come the other two.

*Ron and Gus exit.*

*Enter Helen and Luke who stumbles a bit as he walks.*

Helen:           Go home and get some sleep and when you wake up you'll remember that  
                      you're supposed to be in love with Mia.

Luke:            I should be in love with you.

Helen:           It's bad enough that you're drunk, following me around Greektown and  
                      saying things you really don't mean. Are you sure you're not greek?

Luke: I'd admit to loving and hating everybody passionately, if I were greek.

Helen: All right, time to take you home.

Luke: *(Looks to the stage floor.)* This looks like the perfect place.

*Luke collapses and closes his eyes.*

Helen: Where's Mia now to see her great catch?

*Helen sits beside Luke on the floor and tries to wake him.*

*Enter Demetre and Mia.*

Mia: Oh my God! What happened to Luke?

Demetre: He's fine, he just needs some time to sober up. I see this all the time in the restaurants. Men drink, get up, fall down, get up, fall down--it's quite amusing really. They are quite useless and don't have any idea what's going on.

Mia: You find this amusing? This isn't a show!

Helen: I've never heard you speak like this.

Demetre: I can speak and say anything I want. I don't need your permission.

Helen: Look, he's starting to move. *(Motions toward Luke.)*

*Luke stirs.*

Mia: Permission. You don't know the meaning of the word. Everybody knows what you do with those drunken slobs.

Helen: What are you talking about Mia?

Mia: Open your eyes and stop trying to live out your parents' fantasy.

Helen: I want what they want for me. I want a marriage like Steve and Lyta's,  
like Ron and Tania's.

Mia: Are you sure you didn't have anything to drink? Do you not see what goes  
on beyond the Federation's doors?

Demetre: Ignore her, Helen.

Mia: The truth has to surface and you've got to face it because you know it  
exists.

Helen: What are you talking about?

Demetre: Forget it. If you love me, leave.

*(Luke stirs and sits up and everyone becomes quiet.)*

Luke: Demetre.

Helen: What?

Luke: You all think I'm drunk. I'm drunk on the truth. I've been drinking it in  
for such a long time that I want to throw it up. Make you face what you  
don't want to admit.

*Demetre begins to walk away.*

Luke: You think you're so greek. All of you. You carry your culture like a cross  
that you hand down from generation to generation. You don't want  
anyone else to help you carry the load. The old men in their dark and  
smoky coffee houses, and the old women sitting in churches complain  
about the labour of maintaining a culture in a country they call home.  
You don't want to let others in.

Demetre: I don't have to listen to him.

Luke: If it's anyone who should stick around and listen it's you.

Helen: What are you talking about?

Luke: Culture isn't a commodity or a bargaining tool.

Helen: I'm not listening to a drunken man for sober advice.

Mia: He'll say it.

Luke: Helen, open your eyes.

Mia: Say it, say it.

Demetre: Say it and you'll regret it.

Luke: No more bullshit.

Mia: Why must you pursue a man you cannot have?

Helen

and

Demtre: I want...

Luke: Everybody knows Demetre is a chrysalis during the day and a butterfly at night He closes the restaurant and...

Demetre:       At least let me tell it; how the town knows, how my father knows. He saw me wear my mother's dress, pumps and make-up and walk around the house with hand bag in tow. Tell them the number of beatings and priests who've tried to exorcize my invisible demon--my soul. I lead a double life--one for my father, the other one is my own. It's like holding down two jobs--one in the day and one at night, trying to make ends meet, but they never do...now you've touched my wings.

*Stage goes black.*

Act 4

Scene 1

*Ron and Tania's master bedroom.*

*Nick lying on the bed. He's propped up with pillows facing the audience.*

*Enter Tania wearing a negligee and still under the influence.*

Tania:           What do you think?

Nick:            Nice.

Tania:           How about some music?

Nick:            How about some food?

Tania:           I'll give you something to eat.

*She walks over to her bed, straddles Nick, and then collapses in his arms as her head slumps over his shoulder.*

Nick:            Great! No food, no sex!

*Nick pushes Tania over to the other side of the bed, so he can get up and leave.*

*Enter Ron.*

Ron:            You can't cheat on me even when you fall into a man's lap.

*Nick struggles to get Tania off him and get out of the bed.*

*Enter Gus.*

Gus:            The Federation's...

Ron:            This is my business and not yours or the Federation's.

Gus:            Ron, Steve and Lyta...

Ron:            What? Don't tell me you brought them over?

Gus: No, listen--the money, it's gone!

Ron: What are you talking about?

*Enter Aggie. Nick pushes Tania off and runs out of the bedroom.*

Gus: I don't know what to do, where to go?

Ron: What's going on? Hey! Get that stupid FOB!

Gus: The money, Ron--Steve and Lyta took off with the Federation's money.

Ron: What??!!

Gus: It's all gone and so are they. What are we going to do?

*Stage goes black.*

## Scene 2

*Peter's house. Peter paces in his basement around the table where he and Nick usually play backgammon.*

Peter:           *Sheet!* Where Nick? He know we play and he supposed to be here--fuck!  
*The game board lies idle on the table and Peter picks up dice and throws them angrily against the board.*

*Nick enters.*

Nick:           Eh! Wait till I tell you what happen.

Peter:           Where the fuck you been?

Nick:           Oh I wish I wasn't born! I got to hide from Ron.

Peter:           Greek mafia guy, why?

Nick:           He caught me in bed with his wife, but she too drunk to do anything, and I  
don't do anything but he's going to kill me anyway.

Peter:           You stupid *malaka!* Try to get fuck and you get caught. Stupid. You  
deserve to die. So sit and play until then.

Nick:           He's going to kill me!

Peter:           *(Sarcastically)* Don't worry. I'll make sure he goes to jail because I'll be  
your witness.

*Stage goes black.*



Act 5

Scene 1

*Place: The Board Room of the Hellenic Canadian Federation Offices.*

*Enter Ron, and Gus.*

Ron:           The money may be gone, but I'm not going to let that FOB and my wife  
                  get away.

Gus:           But I thought nothing happened and you're the one who...

Ron:           Don't even go there!

Gus:           Why do the two of you...

*Enter Aggie in a panic.*

Aggie:         The two of them...they did it, they did it!

Gus:           What's wrong? Calm down!

Aggie:         Helen told me. Helen told me.

Gus:           What did she tell you?

Aggie:         Where's Steve? Where's Steve?

Ron:           In jail, eventually, if I get it my way.

Gus:           Now you want to do something when it's too late?

Ron:           It's not late!

Aggie:         It's too late!

Gus:           What do you know?

Aggie:         They got married.

Ron:           Who got married?

Aggie: Mia and Luke.

Ron: Is that it! I caught my wife in bed with another man, and Steve took off with the Federation's money.

Aggie: Steve's gone? What am I going to do?

Gus: Be happy she didn't marry greek.

Ron: What am I going to do?

Gus: Are you asking me?

Ron: Yes.

Gus: I don't get paid enough to give you advice.

Ron: I've been to hell and back and then to hell again.

Aggie: I'm in hell.

Gus: Neither of you get it! People are at stake, and not a culture. The Federation and its money don't make us greek.

*Enter Luke.*

Luke: Then what does?

*Aggie tries to lunge toward and attack Luke but Gus and Ron stop him.*

Aggie: Where's Mia?

Luke: With me.

Aggie: She's mine.

Luke: She chose me.

Ron: While the two of you bicker over a woman, I have to do something. What am I going to do?

Gus:           Nothing. You'll do nothing.

Ron:           That's it.

Gus:           All of you accept what you get. Nothing more, nothing less. *(Points to Aggie.)* You old man, accept your new son, *(points to Ron)* you accept your responsibilities as new president and husband, and I'm leaving.

*Gus exits.*

Ron:           Gus, come back! I can't do it myself!

Luke:          You're all impotent!

*Aggie collapses to the ground. Stage goes black.*

## Scene 2

*A tombstone is placed in the center of the stage with mourners dressed in black around it and they are: Mia, Luke, Helen, Aggie, Ron, Tania, Nick and Peter.*

Peter:           So young, so young.

Nick:            He could never have children.

Peter:           Ssshhh! Show respect.

Nick:            But...

Peter:           Let's go.

*Peter and Nick exit. Ron and Tania hold hands and walk away from the tomb stone.*

Ron:            It's too bad...

Tania:           ...that this brought us together.

*Ron and Tania exit.*

Aggie:           We could've done something. I could've talked to his father.

*Mia walks over to her father and wraps her arm around his shoulders and Luke approaches Aggie from the other side.*

Mia:            You know he would never have accepted the truth about his only son, his only heir.

Luke:           Now we have to worry about the living and not the dead.

Mia: I hope Helen will be all right. *(Leaves her father's side and approaches Helen, who kneels by the stone.)* Do you want us to wait and take you home?

Helen: Go ahead.

*Aggie, Mia and Luke exit. Helen stands and speaks.*

Helen: A permanent solution to a temporary problem. You betrayed and left us all, Demetre, and I think it's time I do the same to you.

*Helen exits.*

*Stage goes black.*

***Table Talk***

**by Helen M. Sianos**

**Dramatis Personae**

**Magda--Mary and Joe's daughter in her thirties**

**John--Mary and Joe's son in his thirties**

**Mary--Anne and Peter's daughter in her early fifties**

**Joe--Mary's husband in his late fifties**

**Anne--Mary's mother in her late seventies**

**Peter--Anne's husband and Mary's father in his late seventies**

Act 1

*Magda and John sit at a kitchen table talking over their cups of coffee.*

MAGDA: You know, John...

JOHN: What?

MAGDA: No one's good enough for mother.

JOHN: I know, I know but...

MAGDA: Christ cannot be my lover or the best man at your wedding.

JOHN: She wants everything to go according to His gospel.

MAGDA: No, no...we should be living our lives according to her gospel.

JOHN: Well she can forget it!

MAGDA: Mother thinks religion is the answer to all our problems.

JOHN: They're her problems and not ours.

MAGDA: I have no problems. We've never been problem children.

JOHN: We've been the good and dutiful children...

MAGDA: ...and grandchildren, and students and friends. We have successful careers, stocks, bonds and mutual funds. Now she wants more...

JOHN: She wants in-laws, and grandchildren.

MAGDA: Well, I'm sorry, but I just can't provide.

JOHN: Magda, you're preaching to the converted. Mom knows the truth; she doesn't want to believe it.

MAGDA: She's weaving a tale in her head--a myth about the life she wants us to lead.

JOHN: I want to try to have a life with Susan. She's telling people we're engaged when we're not and don't plan on it.

MAGDA: She's trying to convince others while convincing herself that neither one of us lives in sin.

JOHN: I can remember a time when she wasn't like this...

MAGDA: Yeah, there was a time when we could both talk and laugh with her...

JOHN: She was more human. I remember the time I heard them making love in their bedroom and I came crying into your room...

MAGDA: *(Laughs)*. Because you thought she was in pain and you were wondering where was father to help her.

JOHN: Maybe they can't satisfy each other?

MAGDA: Maybe she can't satisfy herself?

JOHN: In all of this, we shouldn't ignore father.

MAGDA: I bet that when they're in bed together she preaches to him how we should live our lives.

JOHN: I wonder if they still sleep together? Magda, you know, it's not just our lives she's trying to control, but our grandparents' lives too.

MAGDA: Why doesn't she leave them alone?

JOHN: I prefer she meddles in their lives as well, because it takes the heat off of us, for a while anyway.



MAGDA: Grandmother is passive and lets grandfather do all the work. In the meantime, our mother is overcompensating for a trait her mother lacks and we pay for it over and over, again and again.

JOHN: Interesting how the pattern repeats itself.

MAGDA: What do you mean?

JOHN: Well, look at our father. He's the male equivalent of our grandmother. How much can he keep swallowing from mother?

MAGDA: Are you saying that mother is like grandfather? I don't think so. Mother won't discuss, it but we all know the truth. Another skeleton she's trying to bury. Make sure you don't fall into the same grave our parents have dug, my dear brother.

JOHN: What do you mean? Susan's not passive?

MAGDA: Exactly.

JOHN: Are you saying I am?

MAGDA: Well...

JOHN: If that's what you think then you're a b\_\_\_\_

MAGDA: Don't even think that stereotype. I've totally broken away from the pattern.

JOHN: If you're so different, then why can't you convince our mother?

MAGDA: She's not listening.

JOHN: She stopped doing that a long time ago.

MAGDA: Maybe I should change my approach.

JOHN: Maybe I should give grandmother a call and find out if there's any other way to reach her.

*Blackout.*

Act 2

*The audience hears several rings before the spotlight comes on Anne as she sits at a table, lifts the receiver and speaks into it.*

ANNE:       Hi John! (pause) Fine. (Pause) How's Susan? (pause) Good. (Pause) Yeah, grandfather's fine. He's inside the tv room watching the news. (Pause) Yeah, I guess some things never change. *(In the background a news broadcast is heard and gets progressively louder.)* Yeah, hold on a sec John, your grandfather's going deaf and he keeps cranking up the volume. *(Anne yells)* Peter! Turn down the tv or else the neighbors will hear the news too. *(Anne's voice settles as the volume decreases to the point where it is no longer heard.)* You know, John, your mother could've picked a better retirement home...these walls are paper thin. Christ! I can hear Martha next door when she farts. But oh no, she picks this one so we would be nearby. She thinks she's my mother. At least she lets your grandfather and me live alone and have some privacy. If she had it her way we'd be living in your basement apartment in the house. Sometimes she treats me and your grandfather like precious china dolls. She thinks she can keep us alive forever. She cannot play God! But no--your grandfather and I don't need anything, but it was sweet that you thought of us while you were on your way. (Pause) Yes, I'll give him your and Susan's love. All right, bye. *(She hangs up the receiver and calls out to Peter.)* Peter, that was John, he sends his love.

*Peter enters.*

PETER:       Yeah, yeah, I heard ya. How are the kids?

ANNE: John just called to see if we needed anything from the pharmacy.

PETER: So, how is he?

ANNE: I forgot to ask.

PETER: How's the latest one doing?

ANNE: What do you mean?

PETER: What's `er name? Sharon?

ANNE: You mean Susan?

PETER: Yeah? But isn't Sharon...

ANNE: She's fine.

PETER: If only I were young again...

ANNE: I heard that and you're not, so forget it!

PETER: Wish you were feisty like that when we were young.

ANNE: I was, but you didn't notice.

PETER: Woman, that's the past. What are we doing tomorrow?

ANNE: Mary's invited us for supper.

PETER: God, is it Sunday again? I can't keep track of the days anymore...

ANNE: It's an important one for Mary and the family so we better go.

PETER: Every Sunday, it's the same thing over and over again.

ANNE: Well, I think it's useless trying to convince Mary that we don't need to move in with her and Joe.

PETER: And do what? Go and live in the basement of her house so you can have her stop all the guilt trips?

ANNE: Other children would love to have parents who want to live independently.

PETER: But not Mary, nope, she wants us all to live with her. If she had her way, John and Magda would be in their rooms, sleeping in their twin beds, wearing those pajamas with the feet. Christ! Why doesn't Joe say something, anything? Why doesn't he react?

ANNE: Well, when we go over tomorrow maybe you can try to convince both of them.

PETER: What? For the hundredth time? And the kids will be there too, won't they?

ANNE: They'll understand. If there's one thing I can say about Mary is that she raised proper children.

PETER: Don't they have any problems with her?

ANNE: Why would they? They do everything they're told.

PETER: Do they?

ANNE: I'm sure this time you'll be able to convince her that moving in with her and Joe is not the best idea.

PETER: She's your daughter too, you know?

ANNE: But she listens to you.

PETER: Could've fooled me.

ANNE: You've got to try.

PETER: Why don't you ever make the effort? Why do I always have to be the bad parent?

ANNE: Anyway, Mary told me that John will have some good news to share with us.

PETER: What news?

ANNE: He's engaged!

PETER: When did this happen? That was fast. He's only known the latest one for a couple of months. Shouldn't they live together before...

ANNE: I told you Peter, that the children do as they're told.

PETER: Well then, that John is a wimp who hasn't weaned himself off his mother's tit! Christ! And what about Magda?

ANNE: What about her?

PETER: Here we go again! Don't play dumb, woman! Is she in or out?

ANNE: Peter! After all the studying she's done! How dare you assume she's out of a job! She's a career woman!

PETER: I forgot, the unemployment line is Joe's job, not Magda's.

ANNE: Joe was a good provider.

PETER: If I told him once, I told him one hundred times, handcrafted, wooden furniture is only a thing the rich can afford...it's a thing of the past, he's got to learn to use the latest technology and get hired somewhere, because I don't know how much longer Mary will let the kids keep taking care of the bills and such.

ANNE: They've always managed.

PETER: Joe had kids to take care of him and not the other way around.

ANNE: And what's wrong with that?

PETER: It's not right?

ANNE: But Peter, Mary's paying for our apartment.

PETER: And what? That gives her permission to do the same to their children? Is that all she knows?

ANNE: It's what has been passed down to her; her only inheritance.

PETER: Don't make me feel guilty woman! I, I mean, we did not give our daughter an inheritance of burden and guilt.

ANNE: The sins of the father...

PETER: ...and the mother should not get passed on to their children.

ANNE: And grandchildren.

*Blackout.*

Act 3

*Mary and Joe's bedroom. Two chairs are on either side of their bed. The bed is neatly made.*

*Mary wears a long house coat and sits on one chair brushing her hair methodically. Joe sits on the other chair on the other side of the bed smoking a cigarette with the ashtray on the side night table. He is still fully dressed.*

MARY: Must you smoke in our bedroom?

JOE: If you don't like it then go to another room.

MARY: This is my bedroom too, so why should I have to leave?

JOE: Yeah, why should you?

MARY: It's just that the smell gets in my hair and my clothes...

JOE: You've put up with it for 25 years, so what's the big deal now?

MARY: It's not right.

JOE: You used to think it was sexy because you didn't smoke and your friends knew when you had spend the night at my place because you carried my scent.

MARY: That was then. *(Sniffs her night gown.)* And all my clothes, whether they've been washed or not, smell like the inside of an ashtray.

JOE: The nicotine calms my nerves.

MARY: People who work have nerves.

JOE: So, only then would you permit me to smoke?

MARY: All I'm saying...

JOE: Should I ask for permission even to lift the toilet seat to piss.? You're not my mother!



MARY: Anyway, my parents and the children are coming tomorrow for supper.

JOE: How do you manage to change the...

MARY: John's going to tell us some big news.

JOE: He told you but not me?

MARY: He didn't tell me. A mother can sense when something good is going to happen to one of her children.

JOE: Do you want me to pick up anything?

MARY: No, I just want you to behave.

JOE: Who do you think you're talking to?

MARY: I know exactly who I'm talking to and I don't want to start a scene before we go to bed.

JOE: Scene, I'll give you a scene! You can have the bed to yourself tonight and think about what you've said.

MARY: Don't be a child, Joe!

JOE: What I'm about to do is not childish. It's something I should've done a while ago, but the sex was great so I put up with you. Now, that's no longer the case.

MARY: What are you talking about?

JOE: It's like all of a sudden you've discovered religion, faith and God and would rather spend more time with Him than me.

MARY: Don't talk like that.

JOE: I can talk any way I damn well please.

MARY: I won't let you.

JOE: Just watch me. *Goes to the bedroom window, opens it and begins to scream.* Hey everybody, Mary was the best fuck I ever had, now she's all dried up and won't let anyone in!

*Mary rushes over to Joe, grabs his arm, pulls him away from the window and slams it shut.*

MARY: Dear God! I hope the neighbours didn't hear.

JOE: You're worried more about the neighbours than what's happening to us, your kids, your folks.

MARY: I know exactly what's going on. I'm in complete control.

JOE: No you don't.

MARY: Prove it.

JOE: I'm walking out of here and sleeping alone, bet you didn't see that one coming, you religious whore.

MARY: You can't do that, I won't permit it.

JOE: You don't own me.

MARY: Who pays the bills? Who paid for the cigarettes you're smoking?

JOE: You ungrateful...

MARY: Don't call me that, Joe, because you know it's not true!

JOE: I was good and useful when I had the business and you went around bragging to your friends; I was good and useful when I donated my sperm and gave you two kids...and now I'm just a prop so people won't see, or think or hear...

MARY: *(Helplessly)* Joe, please, for the sake of the children.

JOE: But they're not children anymore and they don't live under the same roof...

MARY: But we're still their parents.

JOE: Thank you for including me, but we should try to be their friends, their equals.

MARY: Equals? Friends I can understand, but equals?

JOE: Scared you might lose power over them?

MARY: It's not a matter of power, it's a matter of organized relationships.

JOE: What? You mean like organized religion? And who do you think you are? The pope? Or better yet, the Virgin Mary? *(Starts laughing uncontrollably.)* If that's the case then where do your parents belong in your grand scheme of things? In your little universe?

MARY: *(Smirkish smile cuts across her face.)* Now you're being silly.

JOE: Now you're not answering my question.

MARY: And who are you questioning me like that? Pontius Pilate?

JOE: No, you play that role quite well yourself.

MARY: What are you talking about?

JOE: The proof is in our children, Mary.

MARY: I'm not listening to this.

JOE: To what? The way you make them chose between the life they want to lead and the life you want them to lead?

MARY: You're not making sense, Joe.

JOE: I'm probably making sense for the first time in my life. We've all been trying to tell you how things really are but you won't listen. Why?

MARY: When each of you seeks me and speaks to me, I listen; and I think it's only fair that I respond with how I truly feel and not how you want me to answer.

JOE: What are you talking about? Do you ever listen to yourself when you speak?

MARY: Life isn't about acceptable answers.

JOE: And life isn't about actions that you think are acceptable. Maybe we're all hoping you'll accept who we are and our conditions.

MARY: I never thought my opinion mattered and maybe I should never say anything again, never listen or respond. Would that be better?

JOE: My God, Mary? You're always jumping to extremes. Don't you get it?

MARY: I get it, Joe! It's all of you that don't.

JOE: What do you want from us?

MARY: I want all of us to get it together...to come together.

JOE: And what will that achieve Mary? A closer union with your God?

*Joe exits. Stage goes black.*

#### Act 4

*Spotlight on Joe who is sitting at the table. He's smoking a cigarette without an ashtray. Joe sits and smokes while ashes fall on the table and floor. This continues for thirty seconds, he pushes his chair back, stands, takes his cigarette and crushes it with his foot beside the chair/table. He exits.*

*Stage goes black.*

Act 5

*Mary's bedroom. She wears her nightgown, faces the audience, holds the Bible, and prays before she goes to sleep.*

MARY:        My father, You are in heaven, holy is Your name, Your time will come, Your will be done, your desires carried out on earth as you would want in Heaven, by your servant Mary. Give me this day the strength to endure and keep my family together. Forgive my daughter for straying from your path, forgive my son for trespassing on one of your holy sacraments, forgive my parents for wanting to break their bond, forgive my husband who no longer sleeps in the same bed with me; for I forgive them who've broken my heart. God, deliver me from evil temptations for your kingdom has the power and the glory to fortify me forever and ever, Amen.

*Stage goes black.*

Act 6

*Sunday Dinner. The table is set with china, stemware, and cutlery. Six chairs surround the table. Enter Joe who sits by the table and uses one of the plates as an ashtray. Enter Mary carrying the napkins.*

MARY:        So glad you could make it.

JOE:            Wouldn't miss this for the world.

MARY:        Must you use...

JOE:            Last time I checked, these plates were a gift for both of us on our wedding day.

*Knock on the door.*

MARY:        It's open! Come on in!

*Enter Mary's parents: Peter and Anne followed by Magda and John.*

PETER:        We're here and look who we brought with us!

ANNE:        They were lost and we helped them find their way home.

*Magda and Joe go over and kiss their mother on her cheek.*

MAGDA:      It smells really good! What did you make?

MARY:        All right, everybody sit down and I'll start serving the lamb chops before they get cold.

JOHN:        Smells really good, can't wait.

MARY:        You know what they say, Magda, the way to a man's heart is through his stomach.

JOE:          That wasn't our case.

MARY:        Sorry, dear, I didn't hear that.

JOE:           You don't want to hear it.

MAGDA:       Mom, there is no...

PETER:       John, how's Sharon?

ANNE:       It's Susan, dear.

PETER:       Whatever.

MAGDA:       Sharon's my...

JOHN:       She's fine.

ANNE:       Why didn't she come?

PETER:       Yeah, it would've been nice to look at something pretty.

MARY:       This dinner is for family only.

JOHN:       But they are our family.

MARY:       What are you talking about? We're your family.

JOE:       Let go of the umbilical cord, Mary. Cut it off, for Christ's sake.

MARY:       I've made a wonderful meal and I'm not going to let you spoil it.

PETER:       Can we for once eat the goddamn meal?

MARY:       Father!

JOHN:       My God!

MAGDA:       Here we go!

MARY:       Mother, say something.

ANNE:       This is your house.

MARY:       But he's your husband.

ANNE:       And he's your father.



MARY: See, if you moved in with us we wouldn't have these communication problems.

PETER: Communication problems? What communication problems? What part of 'let's-eat' don't you understand?

MARY: All of you misunderstand me.

MAGDA: Excuse me!

JOHN: Magda don't! Every Sunday it's the same verbal blood-bath over and over and over again.

MAGDA: We mis-under-stand you? I stand here, still under your control and you dismiss the point.

MARY: I won't hear it again!

JOE: Speak your mind, tell her how it is, and not how she wants it to be.

MAGDA: None of us can lead our lives according to your plans. You're on a mission to crucify lifestyles. Well, we're not going to convert. I'm not going to provide you with the next generation of Joes and Marys.

JOHN: Don't leave that burden up to me. It's not fair.

MAGDA: Life isn't black or white, mother. I live in the grey areas so you better face it.  
You know Sharon and I aren't friends. Admit it!

*Slowly each character stands, approaches, confronts and surrounds Mary who now stands in front of the table on the centre of the stage.*

JOHN: Susan's my girlfriend and Sharon's her lover.

ANNE: There, there dear, don't

MARY: Don't touch me, mother!

PETER: Don't talk to your mother like that!

MARY: You're the one who taught me! Each night as you came in drunk and the smell of other women on your clothes. Why didn't you say anything?

ANNE: You needed a father.

MARY: I needed both of you to give my life structure, instead I've had to find it and make it on my own.

MAGDA: We still need you.

JOHN: To understand.

MAGDA: To accept.

JOE: To move on.

MARY: I don't need to listen to any of you! You all come to me. I own you all.

PETER: See, I told you Anne...

ANNE: You can't mean it, dear.

MARY: Well, if tonight is going to be about honesty let's put it all out on the table.

JOHN: Mom, don't go there. Nobody needs to know.

MARY: You're going to get engaged and then married, right, John?

JOHN: Oh no you don't! Just because you've attacked everybody in this room except me, so far, doesn't give you the right to aim at me. Anyway, who owns whom, dear mother?

MARY: Don't you dare, John!

JOHN: I think it's about time I turned some tables. I've been quiet long enough. I sit and listen to you all like your confessor.

MAGDA: John!

JOHN: It's time you all heard the truth. I own this family and I'm the one who keeps it going.

MAGDA: You're nuts, John! What are you talking about?

JOHN: I'm talking about all the money I've given mother to support herself, father, and our grandparents.

PETER: The shit has hit the fan! Watch out for the landing.

MAGDA: Mother, is this true?

JOE: You're joking, right John?

JOHN: If it were a joke I'd be using monopoly money instead.

MAGDA: So would I.

JOE: Oh God!

ANNE: No use calling on Him now!

MARY: You have no right to speak, mother.

JOHN: I've been paying for all of you and I've been left with nothing. You won't even let me lead my life, even though I pay for it over and over again to you and this family.

MAGDA: What the fuck is going on?

ANNE: Magda! What language!

MAGDA: I can use any goddamn, fucking language I want, especially since I've been paying for it with my fucking money as well.

JOHN: For fuck's sake! Mother, have you gone to Magda too for money?

JOE: Mary? Is this true? Have you shamed me to my own children?

MARY: They are our children and they should help us when we need it. We brought them into this world and that much I know they owe us.

ANNE: *(In a whisper.)* Oh God! Everything is coming apart, apart. The pieces must be put back, the parts must come together.

PETER: Fuck! The old woman's losing it in the middle of this fucking mess!

JOE: Shut the fuck up, old man, I've put up with your shit long enough, making me think that you own me, that you've been giving me money to support this family when all along it's been my children. You motherf-----*(raises his hand to hit Peter but cannot move it and it stays motionless in midair, until it comes down slowly and the family watch in horror as he hits himself in the chest.)* I'm to blame, I'm a useless father, husband and son-in-law who lost himself in his own family.

*Joe exits.*

MARY: *(Grinds her teeth and jaw in frustration.)* We've all been telling multiple lies to hide the truth.

MAGDA

AND

JOHN: What truth?

*Anne collapses to the floor into a fetal position and remains motionless.*

PETER: Ah Mary! You and these fucking dinners! You're always trying...

MARY: I'm trying to make things right for all of us.

JOHN: What are you trying to fix, to hide?

MAGDA: What's going on? In my own family I have no fucking clue what's going on.

PETER: *(Sarcastically)* Stop trying to recapture your childhood.

MARY: I never had a childhood. I was too busy mothering her. I have a right to make things the way they should be.

JOHN: Mother, we're people and not puppets you can pose and give dialogue to speak.

MAGDA: If you haven't noticed mother, you are not Barbie and father isn't Ken. We're not plastic, pliable people who can fit your preconceived mold.

PETER: I don't have to take this crap anymore! You can keep your money and your mother. I'm leaving the whole lot of you.

*Peter exits.*

JOHN: That's the best piece of advice that has ever come out of that foul, old man's mouth. It's about time I started living my own life.

*John exits.*

MAGDA: Instead of pulling us together you tore us apart.

*Magda exits. Mary is left alone with Anne on the floor completely still. Mary approaches her mother and tries to move her.*

MARY: Mother, mother, mother *(panic increases in her voice with each touch)*, mother, mother!

Act 7

*Mary and Joe's bedroom. Mary and Joe sit in the chairs beside their beds.*

JOE: Are you happy, Mary?

MARY: What kind of question is that?

JOE: You've alienated all of us. Is this the way you want things to be? Because if it is, you finally got your way.

MARY: It's not my fault, we're all to blame.

JOE: You like having a vegetable for a parent?

MARY: She was lucky. Maybe if they'd done their job...

JOE: It's too late, Mary. You can't go back. Is that the way you see parenting, like some kind of job?

MARY: Yes, but...

JOE: Great! So did you think our marriage was laborious as well?

MARY: No, Joe, just recently...

JOE: Yeah, why have you changed, what's gotten into you? Our kids want nothing to do with us.

MARY: They'll still visit on Sunday, don't worry. Things should be a certain way before...

JOE: Before what, before whom...before the eyes of God? Give me a break! Why am I even here? I hope you and God have a great life together.

*Joe exits.*

MARY:       Before I depart.

*Blackout.*

Act 8

*John and Magda sit at a table.*

JOHN: When are you leaving?

MAGDA: I'm taking the weekend flight out and I'll stay for a week and see how she's doing.

JOHN: Do you think she'll say anything? Explain anything? Confess to anything?

MAGDA: No...she's abiding by her vow of silence and won't speak. But she knows I'm coming. It's driving me nuts.

JOHN: Do you think she'll ever tell us why she did it?

MAGDA: I wish father would go and visit her as well and maybe that would make her speak. However, he says he's not ready to go to the nunnery.

JOHN: I just cannot believe how quickly she just packed and left.

MAGDA: She was looking for another home and found one in the church.

JOHN: Do you think she ever wanted to have children? Do you think she love us?

MAGDA: Do you think that maybe now she's accepted us, forgiven us for whatever we haven't done wrong?

JOHN: Maybe she doesn't even know the answers to our questions and she's trying to figure it out under somebody else's roof.

*Blackout.*



***Bathroom Mirrors***

**by Helen M. Sianos**

**Dramatis Personae**

Gina--office worker in her early forties

Meg--office worker in her early forties

Jen--office worker in her mid to late twenties

Dora--office worker in her late fifties

Linda--office worker in her early twenties

Act 1

*Scene: Corporate Woman's Washroom. Three bathroom mirror frames are positioned on the counter. The mirrors are just frames so the characters speak through them directly looking at the audience at times and speak to other characters.*

*Time: 8:15am*

*Enter Gina. She looks in the mirror and puts on her lipstick and fixes her hair. She poses sideways and suck in her stomach.*

*Enter Meg.*

MEG: Good morning Gina.

GINA: Good morning Meg.

MEG: It feels like I never left this place.

GINA: I know what you mean.

MEG: By the time I get home and make dinner for Tom and the kids it's time for bed.

GINA: Well, T.G.I.F.

*Now Meg joins Gina and they pose and primp themselves in front of the mirrors.*

*Enter Jen.*

MEG

GINA: Morning.

JEN: Morning.

MEG: What's wrong?

JEN: I'm here!

GINA: Don't worry, 4:30 will come soon.

JEN: Not soon enough. I live for the weekend.

*Jen politely makes room for herself to apply her lipstick.*

*Enter Dora.*

DORA: Good morning.

GINA,

JEN &

MEG: Morning!

DORA: Another day with that bitch of a supervisor!

GINA: Try not to pay attention to her.

MEG: Be thankful, you're retiring in less than a year with a nice compensation package and everything.

JEN: Do you think they'll hire me full-time-permanent to replace Dora?

DORA: Hey, I'm not even gone yet and you're talking about me as if I'm dead.

JEN: I don't mean to offend you but Gus and I want to get married and...

DORA: Well wait your turn. I'm still paying off my own daughter's wedding from last year and still need every penny from this place.

MEG: Forget about being hired full-time. I heard that they may merge with another company and get rid of us.

GINA: That rumour is old news. I heard that the big boss wants to sell this place to some American corporation.

JEN: What does that mean?

MEG: It's bad.

GINA: I'm still paying the mortgage, my husband can only work construction in the summer, and my son wants to go to university. So, tell me, what am I going to do?

MEG: What am I supposed to say? My husband and I both work for this place. If they close shop then we're both screwed and we have two young boys who aren't even in school yet.

JEN: I'm supposed to meet with her today about renewing my contract for another year. You don't think...

DORA: I think we're all going to get screwed if we don't get to our desks soon enough.

MEG: You're right, Dora. Next thing you know she'll want us to raise our hands up and ask for her permission to go to the bathroom.

GINA: All right, then let's go. What time are we meeting for break?

DORA: 10:30, as usual.

*They all examine themselves in the mirrors for the last time and exit.*

*Stage goes black.*

Act 2

*Scene: The bathroom.*

*Time: 10:30am*

*Gina, Meg, Jen and Dora enter the bathroom.*

GINA: Did you read that e-mail the bitch sent around?

MEG: Just because she doesn't have a husband or children to call home and check on  
doesn't give her the right.

DORA: She's a bitter, sterile bitch and I hope a truck runs her over as she crosses the  
street to get lunch today.

*Jen commences to put on lipstick and fix her hair.*

JEN: Just do as you're told and make the calls during your breaks.

GINA: But fifteen minutes isn't enough time to talk to my family. I hope she gets a case  
of really nasty diarrhea while she's speeding along on the highway and can't stop  
anywhere, and shits in that expensive car she drives.

MEG: See you're the one who got us in trouble. You get on the phone and talk for half  
an hour and in Italian too.

DORA: You know that pisses off the bitch.

MEG: You're no better, Dora. You keep writing letters on your computer to your family  
in Brazil and send them compliments of the company's mail room.

JEN: You'll get caught. I'm going outside to get a coffee. I'll see you across the street.

*Jen exits.*

GINA: That little shit...who does she think she is?

MEG: Just because she's been here for a year doesn't mean she knows what's going on.

GINA: She's been kissing the bitch's butt, because her contract is up for renewal. It's people like her...

DORA: She's a lazy worker, she won't renew her contract. Every time I tell her to do something she won't do it. Anyway, I want to go and get a coffee too so I'll meet you outside.

*Dora exits.*

GINA: Yeah, but she does everything the bitch asks her to do. She even came in over the weekend and worked without pay.

MEG: If they're going to keep anyone it's these contract and temp workers. They do all the work without the employee benefits.

GINA: Pretty scary.

MEG: Also, Dora's really pissing me off. We're all at the same level and she even tries to get me to do her job.

GINA: I know what you mean. Just because she's retiring doesn't mean I'm going to do her work. I don't get paid enough to put up with her laziness.

MEG: It's not in our job descriptions. Last I checked, I didn't see a put-up-with-Dora's-shit-clause.

GINA: We better go get our coffees before break's over.

*Meg and Gina exit.*

*Stage goes black.*

Act 3

*Scene: The Bathroom.*

*Time: 12:00pm*

*Enter Gina, Meg, Jen and Dora.*

GINA: If I didn't need this job so much I'd quit!

MEG: Why can't I win the lottery for once in my life.

DORA: If I won the lottery I'd still come in to work and make that bitch's life a living hell.

JEN: If you just do as you're told...

GINA: Listen, Jen, we've got families to raise.

JEN: Well, I'm trying to start one. At least you've got full-time-permanent jobs with benefits. I've got nothing.

DORA: You've got the freedom of choice to leave this hell-hole and we don't. We're too old.

MEG: Speak for yourself.

JEN: All she's asking is that we don't have cups of coffee and food on our desks while serving the customers.

GINA: While she's at it, why doesn't she put chains and shackles on our necks, wrists and ankles and carry a whip around the office?

JEN: You don't know how good you have it. I've worked in so many places that treat their employees hundreds of times worse than here.

MEG: Well this is a big corporation and we could sue.

JEN: And you'd win nothing and lose your jobs and then where would you work?

You've all worked here from the time you came out of high school or landed in this country. What are my options?

DORA: That's not my fault.

JEN: I'm not blaming anybody. All I'm saying is that you should ignore her and be grateful for what you've got.

DORA: I've got nothing. I was supposed to have the bitch's job and instead they gave it to her. I've worked here for over 20 years and then in she walks with her MBA and takes my job. I should've had her office. What ever happened to seniority?

MEG: Sssshhhhhh! She uses this bathroom sometimes too, you know.

JEN: I've got nothing to hide. You're just upset because you got caught. What do you think will happen?

MEG: Wouldn't you like to know? You just want my job?

DORA: Haven't I taught you anything?

GINA: Of all the times to sit and write your sister a letter...

MEG: But Dora does it all the time and she never gets caught.

JEN: Yeah! But she does it when the boss is in a meeting and she writes it in another language.

DORA: How many times have I told you to save and clear the screen after you're done?

GINA: My God, Meg, we all took those computer courses that the company paid for...didn't you learn anything?



JEN: Must be nice.

MEG: The one time...

DORA: And of all the things you could sit and write about to your sister...

GINA: You sat and wrote a long letter complaining about the bitch. How bad was it?

MEG: Well, I wrote to my sister that the bitch just got back from vacation from Florida and how she must have sat on the beach with one of those big brimmed hats to protect her ugly face from sun burn.

JEN: Did you really write those exact words?

MEG: Yeah, and even worse. I'm fucked! I also wrote that a sun burn would be a major improvement. I'm supposed to see her after lunch. I'm fucked!

DORA: You're fucked!

JEN: I'm famished. I'll see you across the street. Don't spend the entire lunch hour in here guys! Anyway, I've got that meeting with her about the contract so wish me luck! See ya!

*Jen exits.*

DORA: Why would anyone want to work for this place?

GINA: So what are you going to do?

MEG: I'm going to human resources to see what my rights are. I mean, why do we pay union dues for if we don't have rights and people to protect us?

DORA: Good luck!

GINA: Meg's right! It's bad enough that we no longer get paid time-and-a-half for overtime, now she's telling us that we cannot have coffee at our desks, we can't call family...why doesn't she just make us work seven days a week?

DORA: Bunch of opportunists in the unions. I gotta see it to believe it.

MEG: I've got to try.

*Meg exits.*

GINA: I hope they can help her.

DORA: I wouldn't bet on it.

GINA: My God, look at the time--it's almost 12:30. We better go and grab a bite to eat.

*Gina and Dora exit.*

*Stage goes black.*

Act 4

*Scene: The Bathroom.*

*Time: 3:30pm*

*Enter Gina and Jen.*

GINA: I can't believe she did that!

JEN: And either way, they both got fucked!

GINA: They both got screwed, but Meg didn't have to get Dora in trouble too.

JEN: Especially since all she had was another year before retirement.

GINA: And that was the ugliest scene I've ever seen. Could you believe what the corporation did?

JEN: I've never seen that happen anywhere else before.

GINA: We're ready to go for our afternoon break, and the building's security guards come and escort them away from their desks and out of the building.

JEN: Yeah, all they had time to do was gather their belongings, while the guards and all of us watched.

GINA: They treated them like they were criminals. All they did was write some letters. It's Meg's fault.

JEN: Don't take sides. The walls have ears and we both need our jobs.

GINA: I just cannot believe it. I mean, the three of us worked together for so many years and then Meg...

JEN: She was trying to save her job and her family.

GINA: Dora has a family too, you know. I didn't think Meg was evil.

JEN: She's not evil, she was trying to survive. Either way they both got screwed.

GINA: It's scary how the boss has access to our computers and we didn't even know about it.

JEN: Now you figured that out? God! Every company everywhere can do that.

GINA: Do you think she keeps tabs on who we call and when?

JEN: Wouldn't doubt it.

GINA: Well, we better go for a cigarette and get back to work or else we could be next.

*Stage goes black.*

Act 5

*Scene: The Bathroom.*

*Time: Half an hour before quitting time.*

*Enter Gina and Jen.*

JEN: I can't believe that bitch.

GINA: What happened?

JEN: Well, I had my meeting with her about renewing my contract.

GINA: Yeah, and?

JEN: Fuck! I do everything I'm told, I mind my own business and she says she won't renew my contract. This is my last day on the job.

GINA: Can't the union help you? You pay dues, don't you?

JEN: Yeah! But the dues only guarantee my pay and I don't have any other rights. The reason why she's not renewing my contract is because after a year I'm supposed to be hired permanent-full-time.

GINA: So why don't they hire you? I mean they just fired Meg and Dora.

JEN: She said that it wasn't in her hands and that her superiors said that Meg and Dora's jobs were "redundant" too.

GINA: What does that mean?

JEN: It means that they're going to get one person to do the job of three. She told me it was all part of their downsizing plan. The company doesn't want to pay benefits and all the other nice perks that come with being hired permanent-full-time. Why should they, when people just like me, desperate for work, are willing to work without benefits and security, all for the sake of having money, period.

GINA: But I thought that we were supposed to be bought out by some American corporation.

JEN: Change of plans, I guess. I think they're trying to hold on to the company.

GINA: How can they when they treat their employees like shit? What ever happened to the sense of community this place had?

JEN: Listen, I can't go back in there. It's too degrading. I'm leaving right now. It was great working with you; best of luck with the rest of your life, and watch your back, because you could be next.

GINA: Now don't get bitter just because you got canned.

JEN: Don't be naive, Gina! I'd be careful how often you call the hubby and kids at home from now on.

*Jen exits. Gina stares into the mirror.*

GINA: What a way to start the weekend. Who am I going to go to breaks with? Might as well start bringing a book to read. God, haven't done that in a while.

*Stage goes black.*

Act 6

*Scene: The Bathroom on a Monday morning.*

*Time: 8:15am.*

*Enter Gina who stands in front of the mirror and fixes her hair and make-up.*

GINA: God, another Monday morning.

*Enter Linda.*

LINDA: Good morning.

GINA: Morning.

LINDA: You're probably wondering who I am.

GINA: Yeah, I've never seen you on this floor.

LINDA: Well, I'm the new temp for a while.

GINA: Are you here for the week?

LINDA: Well, that's what I was told, but I'm sure it's just an initiation procedure of sorts.

GINA: Yeah?

LINDA: Well, you know how it is. It's like a probation period within a probation period.

I have an MBA so I'm hoping that will help my chances for staying on longer,  
maybe even permanent-full-time.

GINA: Why don't you try getting through today and then decide what carpeting to chose  
for your executive office.

LINDA: You must think I'm eager and naive, but let me tell you...

GINA: No, let me tell you, we've got five minutes to get to our desks or else both our  
asses are on the line. Welcome aboard.

LINDA: So what time do you take break.

GINA: I don't.

LINDA: What do you mean? I mean legislation states...

GINA: Forget legislation, forget your MBA. I want my job. Have a nice day.

*Gina exits.*

LINDA: But I was told that this is a friendly, family-like corporate environment.

*Stage goes black.*



Act 7

*Scene: The Bathroom.*

*Time: 10:30am.*

*Enter Linda who looks into the mirror and plays/fixes her hair.*

*Enter Gina.*

GINA: What the hell is going on?

LINDA: It's a recent phenomenon. We discussed it in one of my graduate seminar  
courses on business reformation in the post-recession period in North America.

GINA: Speak English, please.

LINDA: Simply said, too many masters and not enough slaves.

GINA: I still don't get it! I mean, the bitch was fired.

LINDA: She hasn't been fired, she's been laid-off.

GINA: What's the difference?

LINDA: Technically, the company could re-hire her, however, her job is redundant.

GINA: There's that word again...Are you sure you've never worked here before?

LINDA: *(Laughs)*. I've worked in many places just like this and what's going on is not  
out of the ordinary. The bitch was lower, or junior management, and upper, or  
senior management, have deemed her position redundant.

GINA: So, when does my turn come to get laid-off? At the next coffee break they'll give  
me the pink slip?

LINDA:(*Smugly*). You're quite spoiled. This is a revolving door economy so you better be able to keep up. Gone are the days of one happily-ever-after-job.

GINA: So what am I supposed to do?

LINDA: Adapt.

*Stage goes black.*